



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## CHAPTER IV

### ANGLO-SPANISH RELATIONS, 1771-1776

The Falkland crisis left behind a sense of injured pride and public humiliation on the part of Spain and on the side of England a total want of confidence in the pacific protestations of Spain. The earlier hope of the British government that mature consideration of the losses of the Seven Years' War would lead Charles III. to desire a reversal of alliances had disappeared within three years of the peace of Paris and each succeeding year had only served to make it clearer that the Spanish government not only meant to cling to the political system which the Bourbons had carried with them to Spain but had become its chief supporter. This impression the events of the recent crisis had confirmed, and its termination brought no revival of belief in the possibility of weaning Charles III. and his ministry from their partiality for France. Some advantage, however, it was hoped could be gained from the strained relations of the Bourbon partners. The "Secret and Private Instructions" of the new ambassador<sup>285</sup> set forth that "as by the late transaction in which the king of Spain found himself deserted by France when he reclaimed her assistance in virtue of the well known *Pacte de Famille* it is highly

<sup>285</sup> Thomas Robinson, second Baron Grantham (1738-1786). Grantham entered the House of Commons for Christchurch in Hampshire in March, 1761. Five years later (11 Oct., 1766) he became one of the commissioners of trade and Plantations. In Feb., 1770, he was promoted to the post of vice-chamberlain of the household, was sworn a member of the privy council and in September of the same year succeeded his father as second Baron Grantham. His appointment as ambassador to Madrid occurred on the 25 January, 1771. His instructions were dated May 23, 1771. He arrived at the Spanish court on August the tenth, 1771, and remained in Spain as British ambassador until the outbreak of war in 1779. From December, 1780 to June, 1782, Grantham held the post of first commissioner of the Board of Trade and Plantations. In July, 1782, he became secretary of state for the southern department in Shelburne's administration, an office which he resigned in April, 1783. He died at Grantham House, Putney Heath, 20 July, 1786.

probable that that connection may be much weakened and that there may remain some resentment in the breasts of His Catholic Majesty and ministers", the English representative should "use all possible means to confirm such disposition by inculcating on proper occasions to the Spanish ministers our sincere desire to cultivate the strictest friendship with the court of Spain . . . which we consider as our old and natural ally and lament to have seen for some time past engaged in so intimate a manner with our natural rival as to give us room to doubt of her good disposition towards us".<sup>286</sup> But while placing a certain confidence in the momentary divergence of French and Spanish policy, and perhaps more on "the ancient inclination for our friendship of the Spanish people—though the Spanish court has been and may continue to be governed by French counsels",<sup>287</sup> the general tenor of Grantham's instructions and the correspondence carried on with him in the first years of his ministry showed how little faith was placed in the continuance of peace beyond the time when the Spanish government should find itself prepared for a renewal of hostilities.

In these years the American phase of the relations of England and Spain are very closely interwoven with European events, the chief incidents being either counterparts of European controversies or their results dependent on the turn of affairs in European chancelleries.

The first matter to engage Lord Grantham's attention on the assumption of his new duties in August, 1771, was the old issue between the two courts concerning the privileges of British warships in the European and colonial harbors of Spain. In its European aspect the controversy had been a lively issue between the two courts since 1767.<sup>288</sup> British warships were accused by

<sup>286</sup> Add. MSS. 24157, Secret and Private Instructions to Lord Grantham, article 4.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.* Article 2.

<sup>288</sup> This very long dispute was inaugurated by the Spanish ambassador in London, Prince Masserano, in November, 1767, in an office to Shelburne in which he stated that his government, on the ground that French and Dutch war vessels were in the habit of loading with silver at Cadiz and selling it fraudulently outside of Spain, was asking all courts to give more precise orders to the captains of their

the Spanish government "of being in a manner stationed in their ports for illicit purposes",<sup>289</sup> of carrying out great quantities of silver, of aiding in the contraband activities of merchant vessels, and of giving encouragement to deserters from other vessels in the harbors and from the Irish regiments of the Spanish army.<sup>290</sup> In June, 1770, the very month in which the British were forced to evacuate Port Egmont, the British secretary of state, fearing that the good relations of the two countries were actually threatened by the issue, had drawn up a long answer to the many Spanish memorials in which considerable concessions were made to meet the Spanish complaints.<sup>291</sup> Dissatisfaction, however, continued, and on July 16, 1771, some months before Grantham's arrival in Spain, royal orders had been sent to the Spanish ports directing that foreign ships of war were to be permitted to enter and stay in Spanish ports only so far as they were by treaty entitled to do so.<sup>292</sup> The prompt acquiescence of the British government in the

warships not to stay in Spanish harbors longer than was necessary. While British vessels had not been actually discovered in this trade, there was always one, the ambassador said, at Cadiz, a second arriving before the first left. (S. P. Spain 178. Masserano to Shelburne, 4 Nov., 1767.) As the admiralty refused to take any action on this vague complaint Masserano renewed his remonstrances a year later stating that in the interval his government's suspicions of contraband activities of the English warships had been fully realized. (S. P. Spain 180. Masserano to Weymouth, 29 Nov., 1768.) From this date forward Spanish complaints on this score were very frequent.

<sup>289</sup> S. P. Spain 181. Gray to Weymouth, 20 March, 1769.

<sup>290</sup> S. P. Spain 182. Masserano to Weymouth, 26 July, 15 and 19 Nov., 1769.

<sup>291</sup> S. P. Spain 184. Weymouth to Masserano, 12 June, 1770. *Ibid.* Weymouth to the Admiralty, 12 June, 1770. Two English officers against whom specific charges had been brought by the Spaniards were not to be allowed to return to a part of the world where they would again offend his Catholic majesty and five midshipmen who had been arrested while going through the gates of Cadiz laden with silver were dismissed from the service. Meanwhile the admiralty was instructed to recommend to the admiral commanding his majesty's forces in the Mediterranean to cultivate a good understanding upon every occasion with officers of his Catholic majesty and to promote friendly intercourse, discountenancing in all who served the king "smuggling acts which are a disgrace to the Service and dishonour the character of officers and gentlemen".

<sup>292</sup> S. P. Spain 187. Harris to Rochford, 16 May, 1771. A hint of this possible action had been thrown out by Grimaldi as early as the previous May, when in a conversation with Harris, he had exclaimed against the ill use which the British ships of war made of the liberties accorded them and had declared that "the only way he saw of effectively stopping it was by not allowing ships to enter port without assigning a specious reason such as the treaties required".

general principle of this order<sup>293</sup> gave great satisfaction at Madrid, and accounted largely for the Spanish government's complacency when it later developed that the British concession was not as great as had at first appeared. In the course of the following month it became clear that England meant to insist that if Spain, according to the terms of the treaty of 1667, secured a recognition of her order that ships of war must be furnished with an excuse if they were to remain in her ports, England should retain its treaty right to unquestioned entrance to the harbors and a tacit recognition by the Spanish government that the British warships were themselves to be the judges of the extent of their necessities and therefore of the validity of their excuses.<sup>294</sup>

While this controversy was in progress in Europe, Anglo-Spanish intercourse in America in 1771 offered in an incident connected with the schooner, *Sir Edward Hawke*, an illustration of the contemporary New World phase of the question of the privileges of British warships and their intimate relation to contraband trade. In the very month in which the order was issued in Old Spain narrowing the rights of foreign warships in Spanish continental ports the *Sir Edward Hawke* of the British Jamaica squadron sailed on a cruise under the command of Lieutenant Gibbs. On July 24, when twenty leagues off Cartagena, the warship sighted a Spanish *guarda costa* and being in need of wood and water the English commander sent on board the foreign vessel for information as to the nearest source of supply. The answer was returned that if the

<sup>293</sup> Add. MSS. 24157. Rochford to the Lords of the Admiralty, 30 Aug., 1771. Rochford despatched a copy of the order accompanied by the sixteenth article of the treaty of 1667 to the admiralty with instructions that it was his majesty's pleasure that the commanders of his ships should conform to the terms of the order. The order from the lords of the admiralty to Sir Peter Denis, commanding British ships in the Mediterranean, was dated 5 Sept., 1771.

<sup>294</sup> These points were especially discussed in connection with the cases of the *Winchelsea* and the *Liverpool*. Add. MSS. 24157. Grantham to Rochford (private and separate), 19 Sept., 1771, enclosing a letter from Don N. Bucareli y Urnia (governor of Cadiz), to Grimaldi, 10 Sept., 1771. *Ibid.* Rochford to Grantham, 11 Oct., 1771. *Ibid.* Rochford to Grantham, 25 Oct., 1771. S. P. Spain 189. Grantham to Rochford, 9 March, 1772. *Ibid.* Grantham to Proconsul Dalrymple, 10 March, 1772 (enclosed in Grantham to Rochford, 13 March, 1772).

English commander would follow the Spanish ship into Boca Chica Road his needs would be attended to. In the darkness which soon afterwards came on, either from accident or design, the *guarda costa* was lost sight of and on the twenty-eighth the needed fuel and water were secured when the vessel reached the island of Rosarios. Three days later, while on the return journey to Jamaica, the *Sir Edward Hawke* was overtaken by two Spanish *guarda costas* bearing orders to compel the English vessel to enter the harbor of Cartagena "at all events". While protesting that his ship was a "king's ship", Gibbs refused to show his commission and finally, without open resistance, followed the *guarda costas* into the Spanish port. When he had satisfied a Spanish officer sent by the governor that his ship was an armed vessel by exhibiting his commission he was informed that he was free to leave when he pleased but not to presume to come within twelve leagues of the coast, for if he was met with he and his crew would be taken prisoners.<sup>295</sup> Immediately upon the return of the *Sir Edward Hawke* to Jamaica a court martial dismissed Gibbs from the service on the charge of "disobedience of orders and suffering His Majesty's colours to be insulted and disgraced by two Spanish *guarda costas* whom he was prevailed on by threats to accompany into the harbour of Cartagena without making any resistance notwithstanding his orders were to keep a good look-out that His Majesty's vessel might not be run into any kind of danger or His Majesty suffer any disgrace from the insults of the *guarda costas* by surprise or otherwise".<sup>296</sup> At once upon the conclusion of the trial two armed vessels were despatched with a letter from the recently arrived commander-in-

<sup>295</sup> S. P. Spain 188. Lieut. A. Gibbs to Captain Hay, 5 Aug., 1771. Enclosed in Rochford to Grantham, 1 Nov., 1771. *Ibid.* John Manuel Lombardon to La Sierra (governor of Cartagena), 6 Aug., 1771. Enclosed in Rochford to Grantham, 3 Dec., 1771. Relation of what happened at sea near Jabanilla the 23 July between the sloop the *Shepherdess* (La Pastora) commanded by Lieut. Don Franc. Ydiaquex and an English schooner which pretended to be a King's ship, but it did not appear to be so. . . . Sent by Governor La Sierra to Captain Hay, 7 August, 1771.

<sup>296</sup> S. P. Spain 188. Minutes of a Court Martial held on board H. M. Achilles in Port Royal Harbor, Jamaica, Monday, 26 Aug., 1771. Enclosed by Rodney to Stephens, 4 Sept., 1771, and by Rochford to Grantham, 1 Nov., 1771.

chief of the British squadron at Jamaica, Sir George Rodney, to the governor of Cartagena with instructions to wait for an answer.

Before the arrival of these messengers, the Spanish authorities at Cartagena had already had their attention called to the seriousness of the step they had taken in interfering with a "king's ship". As Gibbs had been preparing to leave Cartagena, the British frigate *Carysfort*, under the command of Captain Hay, had anchored in Boca Chica Road. The two vessels had had a rendezvous and on the failure of the *Sir Edward Hawke* to appear, Captain Hay, fearing some accident, had sailed for Cartagena where his apprehensions were confirmed by observing the British ship within the Spanish port.<sup>297</sup> While Gibbs returned to Jamaica, Hay remained to remonstrate with the governor of Cartagena.<sup>298</sup> By the seventh of August he had received through the governor an account of the late proceedings from the commandant of the *guarda costas*. This emphasized the suspicious character of the movement of the *Sir Edward Hawke* when first met with by the Spanish ship which had induced the governor and commandant to believe that the vessel was not a king's ship but on the contrary was a trader engaged in illicit traffic on the Spanish Main. As soon as Gibbs' commission had been shown, the commandant pointed out, the vessel had been released and allowed to go free "notwithstanding the notice the captain of 'La Pastora' (one of the *guarda costas*) gave me of a secret and most certain intelligence he had received that the said schooner was loaded with dry goods in bales, liquors in casks, and sundry other things to sell upon our coasts". The twelve leagues threat complained of was declared to be "absolutely an untruth, at least in part, as he (the Spanish captain) only particularly expressed to the captain of the said schooner that if he should meet them in trading upon our coast he would bring him into port,

<sup>297</sup> S. P. Spain 188. Captain Hay to Commodore Mackenzie (of the Jamaica Station), 6 Aug., 1771. Enclosed by Rochford to Grantham, 1 Nov., 1771. (Previously enclosed by Rodney to Stephens, 4 Sept., 1771.)

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.* Captain William Hay to the Governor of Cartagena, 5 Aug., 1771. Enclosed by Rodney to Stephens, 4 Sept. 1771, and enclosed by Rochford to Grantham, 1 Nov., 1771.

which under all the circumstances and especially under the intelligence he had could not be taken as an insult".<sup>299</sup>

Six weeks after the *Carysfort* had sailed with this reply the *Achilles* and *Guadaloupe* arrived before Cartagena with Rodney's letter to Governor Sierra. This despatch, a characteristic one of the period, expressed the admiral's astonishment at hearing, on his arrival to take over his new duties, that "two guarda costas under the pretended sanction of your Excellency's and the Commodore's orders had forced His Majesty's schooner the *Hawke* into Cartagena after they were told and knew whose commission the commander of her had the honour to bear". He was, moreover, informed, he wrote, that "one of the Commodore's lieutenants acquainted the Commander of the schooner on her dismissal from the port of Cartagena that he might go, but that if either the schooner or any other of His Britannic Majesty's ships were afterwards found within twelve leagues of that coast they should be taken and their crews imprisoned". . . . "As your Excellency, I doubt not, is equally disposed with myself to support the harmony which so happily subsists between the two crowns", wrote Rodney, "I cannot be persuaded that you have given the least countenance to these acts of violence". The officer who had dishonored the king's colors by a tame submission to an insult, Sierra was informed, had been dismissed the service and the admiral had the fullest confidence "that your Excellency on your part will immediately order the officers that have acted with such indignity to the British flag to be called to the strictest account and confirm the opinion I would willingly entertain of the impossibility of such a menace being sanctioned by the commodore or any officer of rank who wishes to preserve the general tranquillity."<sup>300</sup>

<sup>299</sup> S. P. Spain 188. La Sierra (governor of Cartagena) to Captain William Hay of the *Carysfort*, 7 Aug., 1771, enclosing a letter from Dom Manuel Lombaradon, (commandant of *guarda costas*), to Governor Sierra, 6 Aug., 1771, which included a paper entitled the 'Relation of What happened at Jabanilla, 23 July, between the sloop 'La Pastora' commanded by Lieut. Don Franc Ydiaguex and an English schooner which pretended to be a King's ship, but did not appear to be so.' All three were forwarded by Rochford to Grantham, 3 Dec., 1771.

<sup>300</sup> S. P. Spain 188. Admiral Rodney to Governor Sierra, 3 Sept., 1771. Copy enclosed to the Earl of Sandwich, 7 Oct., 1771. Enclosed by Rochford to Grantham, 27 Dec., 1771.



To Admiral Rodney's letter, Governor Sierra replied that as the marine department of the *guarda costas* was separate from his command he had no part in the alleged insult, but had forwarded the admiral's letter to the commandant of the *guarda costas* whose answer he enclosed. The commandant in his letter refused a court martial on the double ground that he had not the authority to call one, and that his captains had committed no fault. The schooner, he repeated, had not been known to be a king's ship until it was in the harbor and its officer had been prevailed on to show his commission. The vessel had then been at once released. As there had been many prizes made upon that coast, English as well as French, which when at sea had pretended to be vessels of war, "their captains wearing uniforms and some of their sailors red coats in order to appear like soldiers", the suspicion in the case of the *Hawke*, the Spanish officer asserted, had been a very natural one.<sup>301</sup>

As Lombardon's letter made no reference to the matter of greatest interest in the whole incident, the twelve leagues threat, Rodney despatched another cruiser with a letter addressed to the commandant himself. This epistle not only drew attention to the oversight, but entered into detail on the general question of the right of search as applicable to both war vessels and trading ships. "Frequent complaints", the admiral wrote, "were being made to him of trading ships being on the most slight and groundless pretences molested and searched by Spanish *guarda costas*" and he warned the commandant that he would "strenuously assert the freedom of our navigation and not suffer our merchant ships to be searched and the conduct of his officers so far questioned as to be forced to produce their commissions". As a sea officer, the admiral believed that the commandant must be sensible that ships from Jamaica bound to Curaçao and to the British Islands were frequently obliged to stretch near the continent and were not therefore from the mere circumstance of being found on the Spanish coast to be reasonably suspected of carrying

<sup>301</sup> S. P. Spain 188. Lombardon to La Sierra, 20 Sept., 1771. Sent by La Sierra to Rodney, 21 Sept., 1771. Both sent to Mr. Stephens by Rodney, 7 October, 1771, and by Rochford to Grantham, 27 December, 1771.

on an illegal trade. The letter concluded: "I must beg that you will give the strictest orders to the Guarda costas that they do not on such pretence only detain, search, or molest any ships or vessels belonging to His Britannic Majesty".<sup>302</sup>

Lombardon's reply was framed in most polite and conciliatory terms. All blame for the twelve leagues threat was cast upon the Portuguese interpreter of the schooner "whose falsity and extraordinary equivocation" was declared to be responsible for all the difficulties which had arisen. "So far from having mentioned any other of His Britannic Majesty's vessels, the *Hawke*", wrote Lombardon, "was the only one spoken of, telling the captain, (after having congratulated him upon his arrival and offered him very civilly everything he should have the occasion for both for himself and the vessel he commanded,) that as he had already whatever he wanted and nothing could detain him, he might go when he pleased, that if any guarda costa should meet him again within two leagues of the coast he would render himself suspicious of trading and would certainly be brought into port for being tried, this is in reality what was told him and not what the Portuguese interpreter said untruthfully and maliciously". ". . . To call twelve leagues the seacoast", Lombardon agreed would be "a great piece of madness and extravagancy". As to the notice regarding the complaints of merchant ships being searched and molested at sea by Spanish *guarda costas* the commandant wrote that it was the first he had ever had. He would reinforce his orders for remedying such an abuse if it existed and promised that "none should be searched unless they should be met at anchor upon the coast, or only at two leagues distance from it, as your Excellency must be sensible that those which come so near cannot be innocent". While

<sup>302</sup> S. P. Spain 188. Rodney to Lombardon, 9 Oct., 1771. A copy enclosed by Rodney to Stephens, 7 Oct., 1771, sent by Rochford to Grantham, 27 Dec., 1771.

In a letter to the secretary of the admiralty dated 19 Sept., 1771, Admiral Rodney refers again to the necessity of all ships from Jamaica to Curaçao "to touch nearly upon the Spanish Main" . . . and, added that British subjects trading between Jamaica and the Bay of Honduras were in the same case on their return journey from the bay, having frequently to "stretch as far as Cartagena before they can fetch the Island of Jamaica". Rodney to Stephens, 19 September, 1771. Enclosed by Rochford to Grantham, 3 Dec., 1771.

agreeing that sometimes necessity drove vessels to make the land of the Spanish continent in their navigation, yet the Spanish officer maintained that "being so near they may be guilty and our commission becomes useless as well as the prohibition of clandestine trade if in such a case they should not be searched".<sup>303</sup>

When enclosing the correspondence over the incident to the admiralty, Rodney wrote that he could not help observing that the Spaniards' justification of their conduct in regard to the *Hawke* was founded on an "absolute falsehood" as the strictest scrutiny enabled him to "aver that the schooner had not any merchandise of any sort on board" but was "in obedience to the orders her commander was under proceeding in search of the *Carysfort*."<sup>304</sup> That the Spaniards, however, were right in suspecting that the vessel's mission was not a wholly innocent one, even though they were wrong in believing her to be loaded with dry goods and liquors, is proved by a sworn statement made by Gibbs on his return to England and entitled "A memorandum of what Mr. Gibbs came voluntarily and related on Sunday morning, the twenty-fourth of November, 1771". In this the former commander of the *Sir Edward Hawke* declared that "had he been without any papers he would have surrendered himself as prisoner, but that he thought his papers would have been rummaged and the whole secret money transaction have come to light and all the Spaniards engaged in it would have been put in prison and tried for their lives". In this same document it appears that Mr. Mackenzie<sup>305</sup> gave him orders to appear in every respect as a trading vessel by housing his guns, striking the yards and topmasts, etc".<sup>306</sup>

<sup>303</sup> S. P. Spain 189. Lombardon to Rodney, 24 October, 1771. Enclosed by Rodney to Stephens, 4 December, and from the admiralty office sent to the Earl of Rochford, 24 February, 1772.

<sup>304</sup> S. P. Spain 188. Rodney to Stephens, 15 and 19 September, 1771.

<sup>305</sup> Commodore Mackenzie.

<sup>306</sup> S. P. Spain 188. A memorandum of what Mr. Gibbs came voluntarily and related on Sunday morning, the 24 Nov., 1771.

*Ibid.* Hay to Mackenzie, 6 Aug., 1771, in Rodney to Stephens, 4 Sept., 1771, and Admiralty to Rochford, 1 Nov., 1771. The *Carysfort* made land off Pt. Canoe on the Spanish Main on 19 July and on the 21 was off the Fort. She remained in this position until the 3 August expecting to be joined by the *Sir Edward*

The first papers concerning the case were sent to Grantham at Madrid on the first of November with instructions to wait on Grimaldi and say that it was hoped that the commodore had already given satisfaction, properly punished the officers involved and disavowed "the absurd pretensions" of making prize of any of his majesty's ships found within twelve leagues of the coast as "the King is persuaded that His Catholic Majesty can have given no orders to authorize such indignities as must have an immediate tendency to interrupt the peace which so happily subsists at present".<sup>307</sup> A month later, before the discussion could become serious at Madrid, the ambassador was advised that the insult of seizing a king's ship had been satisfactorily explained by the account from the commander of the *guarda costas* to Captain Hay in which the material circumstance of the commission not having been produced till the *Hawke* was in the harbor was made clear. The particular affair of the schooner was therefore considered at an end. As for the threat which the commandant admitted had been made, that if Gibbs were found trading on the coast, he would be brought in, the secretary of state observed that his majesty had recently given the court of Spain proof of his willingness to punish his officers found engaged in the contraband trade but that he "looked upon the correction of them as only belonging to himself and would not by any means admit such an indignity to his flag as the carrying by compulsion of any vessel bearing his commission into a Spanish port on any pretence whatever". The ambassador was instructed to inform the Spanish government that the commander-in-chief of his majesty's fleet in the West Indies had orders not to

*Hawke*. The latter's failure to appear caused the *Carysfort* to sail for Cartagena on 3 August. She arrived at Boca Chica on 4 August and from there could observe the missing vessel under the guns of the fort of Cartagena.

*Ibid.* Rodney to Stephens, 15 Sept., 1771. It is perhaps not without significance as to the mission of the two war vessels that shortly after the return of the *Carysfort* to Jamaica the merchants of that island had such a large quantity of money to remit to England that they made application to the admiral to allow the *Druid* to proceed to England some days before the sailing of the two frigates, *Carysfort* and *Dunkirk*, which were to carry the specie in order that their correspondents might have an opportunity of insuring the vessels.

<sup>307</sup> Add. MSS 24157. Rochford to Grantham, 1 Nov., 1771.

suffer the king's ships to submit to such treatment in any case whatever and was to make the Spanish court sensible of the consequences which must follow from this policy being attempted by Spain.<sup>308</sup> Privately the secretary of state wrote Grantham that he would do himself infinite credit if he could prevail upon Grimaldi to tell him officially that orders would be sent to the governors in America not to make any attempt upon the king's ships, if they were found carrying on a contraband trade, on the ground that they relied on the British government's promise to give full satisfaction when their complaints were well founded.<sup>309</sup> On December 26, Grantham was able to report that Grimaldi "saw that we were in earnest and had informed him that orders restraining governors and officers in America from meddling with British ships of war were made out and would be forwarded by the next boat".<sup>310</sup>

The right of search as applicable to trading vessels was not made a subject of discussion between the two courts in connection with the case of the *Sir Edward Hawke* but was raised in the same month of December, 1771, in relation to a New York trading sloop bearing the name of *Hawke*. This vessel, returning from a voyage to Curaçao, had found itself, when five leagues off the coast of Hispaniola, stopped by shots from a *guarda costa* and taken into port where it was subjected to a rigorous search and not permitted to leave until its master had paid a heavy exaction on no other account than not having submitted immediately to the visit. In stating the case to Grantham, Rochford remarked that the capture of the two vessels at such a distance from land gave reason to suppose that the Spaniards were pursuing a general plan. There could be no pretense by treaty, the secretary of state wrote, for such a visit and his majesty would never allow it to be exercised on the ships of his subjects pursuing their lawful navigation. Spain was, however, to be allowed to put the payment of the reparation demanded on any ground she pleased.<sup>311</sup>

<sup>308</sup> S. P. Spain 188. Rochford to Grantham, 3 Dec., 1771.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.* Secret and private, 3 Dec., 1771.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.* Grantham to Rochford, 26 Dec., 1771.

<sup>311</sup> S. P. Spain 188. Rochford to Grantham, 3 and 27 Dec., 1771. *Ibid.* Office of Grantham to Grimaldi, 24 Dec., 1771, enclosed by Grantham to Rochford, 26 Dec., 1771.

The ambassador was not to insist on any declaration that Spanish vessels would not visit British ships beyond a limited distance from the coast. Such a fixed rule, whose existence would condemn all ships found within the stipulated space, was the last thing the British desired. It was far more advantageous to cling to the old practice of insisting that on the high seas no pretense served to warrant the searching of their vessels while on the coast the mere presence there was not a sufficient excuse.<sup>312</sup> Discussed intermittently through the following year, the case of the trading sloop *Hawke*, unlike that of its namesake of the war service, remained without a satisfactory termination, proving the greater effectiveness of the method pursued by the navy in securing a desired end.

Lord Grantham, summing up, at the close of 1771, the impression which his first months of duty in Spain had left upon his mind, wrote that while he did not "suspect any plan of hostile intentions to have prevailed at any time since the late accommodation" he could not in the present situation of affairs "flatter himself with any real cordiality towards us".<sup>313</sup> This description of the relations of the two powers applied with as much force to 1772 as to the first year after Prince Masserano's Declaration. Spain continued to occupy through the greater part of 1772 the isolated position in the diplomatic world in which the Falkland crisis had left her and the direct relations of England and Spain fell for the most part outside the main current of European events and were chiefly of a commercial character. One legacy of the

<sup>312</sup> S. P. Spain 190. Rochford to Grantham, 15 May, 1772. In this letter Rochford gave details of the case of the British sloop *Adventure* which had been forcibly searched by a Spanish *guarda costa* "six leagues from St. Vincent and consequently at a much greater distance from any Spanish dominion". After remarking that "we can never permit armed vessels from the Spanish coast to cruise among our islands and search and examine our vessels and interrupt their trade", Rochford instructed the ambassador "if any apology should be attempted to you from the suspicions of a design of contraband trade you will declare it to be totally inadmissible since, exclusive of our constant denial of any right of the Spaniards to seize our vessels at open sea, even on the Spanish coasts on any suspicion whatever, the place where this happened determines the injustice of the act beyond the possibility of a dispute".

<sup>313</sup> Add. MSS. 24157. Grantham to Rochford, private and most secret, 12 Dec., 1771.

late crisis had been the realization that in the last analysis Spain could depend only upon her own resources. Charles III. and his government had in consequence naturally turned with redoubled vigor to the task of the economic development of the peninsula. Through 1771 this movement had principally taken the form of restrictions on the contraband trade carried on through the medium of foreign war vessels. The large measure of success which rewarded efforts in this direction encouraged advance along another line of the general movement whose aim was the encouragement of home industry and the reduction of foreign commerce in the peninsula. An order issued at the close of 1771, prohibiting the importation for use in continental Spain of all cotton manufactures, including Manchester products, aroused, in the possibilities of development which it seemed to open, as widespread consternation among the British merchants as the ban on the former privileges of the warships had among the sailors. "The system of this country changes apace, agriculture and manufactures is now their favourite plan", complained the British consul at Cadiz to Lord Rochford in December, 1771, "should they go on prohibiting the produce of England as they have done in the printed linen and cotton goods, your Excellency knows the consequence".<sup>314</sup> Grantham's protests that the new measure notoriously affected British trade very adversely and could not be looked upon except as a very unfriendly measure and contrary to the treaties which permitted the importation of English produce and manufactures subject only to the known duties were replied to by Grimaldi in words which imputed the measure as solely due to the legitimate policy of encouraging Spanish manufacture, pointed out for the greater comfort of the English that the French were even more seriously affected and closed with the observation that the British manufacturers "would not want a vent as they would clandestinely find their way to the coasts of America".<sup>315</sup> The most the ambassador was

<sup>314</sup> S. P. Spain 188. Dalrymple to Rochford, 20 Dec., 1771.

<sup>315</sup> S. P. Spain 189. Grantham to Rochford, 13 Feb., 1772. Add. MSS. 36806. Letters to Viscount Mountstuart, Ambassador to Spain, 1783-1784. *Memorial of British Merchants trading to Spain to Lord Grantham, one of H. M.'s principal*

able to secure after repeated renewals of his protest was the concession that goods which could be proved to have been shipped before the notice of the publication of the edict could have reached the shipper would be admitted and three months after their arrival allowed for their sale, while the expectation was held out that at the close of the twenty months mentioned in the edict as the period during which foreign cotton goods might lawfully be worn a further extension of time would be connived at.<sup>316</sup>

Early in January, 1772, while the controversy over the admission of foreign cotton goods was at its height an order was issued to prevent foreign goods of any kind from being shipped in the *flota* to the Indies.<sup>317</sup> As English and French goods were usually each of greater value in the total of every *flota* than the Spanish goods shipped, the merchants of these nations felt especially aggrieved, Italians and Germans, whose supplies equaled the value of the Spanish, were not far behind in their lamentations while the Flemings and the Dutch were also affected.<sup>318</sup> The French, more deeply concerned than others, were the first to take action. The Duke D'Aiguillon who was reported to "feel a good deal of pique at the intention of the court of Spain to exclude all foreigners from having any share in their trade to the West Indies as well as contempt at their impotence

*secretaries of State, 22 Jan., 1783.* (A printed pamphlet.) "While Spain has endeavoured to defend its conduct respecting the prohibitions here stated [among others referred to is that against printed linens and cottons] on the principle that it is by the internal and general laws of the land which that government has the right to vary and not by any partial restriction on British trade, it is notorious that such innovations originated in the express and positive intention of breaking off particular branches of trade, which Great Britain had the peculiar means of furnishing and which could not be had in any other country."

<sup>316</sup> S. P. Spain 190. Grantham to Rochford, 21 May, 1772, enclosing letters from Grantham to M. Musquiz and Musquiz to Grantham.

<sup>317</sup> S. P. Spain 189. Grantham to Rochford, 23 Jan. 1772.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.* Dalrymple to Rochford, 27 March, 1772. The pro-consul at Cadiz in this letter gave a fairly full account of the *flota* which was then preparing to sail for the Indies in the following May with the expectation of arriving at Vera Cruz in the succeeding August. It would, he said, consist of two ships of war, thirteen merchant ships, and an auxiliary gun ship, the latter to carry goods which the merchant ships found themselves unable to load. In all some 3,150



to carry such a project into execution"<sup>319</sup> sent such instructions to the French ambassador at Madrid as caused him to make sufficiently strenuous representations to the Spanish government to induce it to remove the prohibition in time to allow foreign goods to be embarked as usual in the spring *flota*.<sup>320</sup>

In America, as in Europe, the year 1772 was a period of unusual quiet in the relations of the two powers. Spain's absorption in domestic matters inclined her to peace abroad, while the explosive conditions in Europe induced both nations to make unusual efforts to prevent the occurrence of major incidents. Admiral Rodney reported from Jamaica in January that, since the affair of the *Sir Edward Hawke*, the Spanish *guarda costas* had been

seamen would be employed. The whole cargo was estimated to be worth 19,784,327 dollars. Of this amount

Products of France	were estimated at	\$7,250,000
" " England	" " "	3,000,000
" " Spain	" " "	2,500,000
" " Italy	" " "	2,500,000
" " Germany	" " "	2,000,000
" " Flanders	" " "	1,500,000
" " Holland	" " "	750,000
" " Sundry	" " "	284,000

Total	\$19,784,000
-------	--------------

The benefits which would accrue to the crown of Spain from the *flota* were estimated as follows:

Duty accruing on 15 millions of foreign goods	\$1,500,000
Duty outward on goods shipped at 10%	1,000,000
Licenses of 13 merchant ships	390,000
	<hr/>
	\$2,890,000
Duty homeward on 20 million dollars at 9%	\$2,400,000
Freight of 20 million dollars brought home at 3%	800,000
	<hr/>
Total	\$6,090,000

Three months would be required for the unloading of the merchant ships after which these vessels would return to Cadiz mostly in ballast. About the middle of 1773, the rear admiral would sail from Vera Cruz and bring home two-thirds of the returns of the *flota*. A later letter mentions May the twenty-ninth as the date on which the *flota* actually sailed. S. P. Spain 189. Grantham to Rochford, 4 June, 1772.

<sup>319</sup> Add. MSS. 24158. Rochford to Grantham, 25 Feb., 1772.

<sup>320</sup> S. P. Spain 189. Grantham to Rochford, 9 March, 1772.

very quiet.<sup>321</sup> He had indeed been informed, he wrote, of the capture of eight English sloops discovered by the Spaniards while engaged in loading timber on the south coast of Cuba, but, as the owners of the vessels admitted that the trade was an illegal one, he had refused to intervene. In the middle of the following summer he informed the admiralty that in making an application for the return of a vessel captured by the Spaniards and carried to Vera Cruz two years earlier he had forwarded his complaint by way of Honduras "having considered that the sending a man-of-war to Vera Cruz might have been productive of disagreeable consequences, the Spanish governors in this part of the world being too apt to insult His Majesty's colours when his ships attempt to enter their ports".<sup>322</sup> In the one American incident of the year on which official diplomatic protest was made, the case of the British sloop *Adventure* captured by a Spanish *guarda costa* while on a journey between Antigua and Grenada, the Spanish court showed itself disposed to take every step to satisfy the British government.<sup>323</sup>

Throughout 1772 and 1773, while colonial issues continued to recede further and further into the background, the English ministry watched with careful attention the relations of Spain to the other courts of Europe, constantly on guard lest this Bourbon power should abandon her isolation and assume an active part in the great events which were absorbing the attention of the rest of Europe. It was felt that the triple alliance of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, with its fatal consequences to Polish national existence and its threat to Swedish independence could not leave any European Power long in indifference. Grantham's reports that the Spanish government "betrayed much discontent" when it learnt that Vienna meant to share in the spoils of a divided Poland, evidently made anxious by the discovery that "it seemed a very easy matter for great Powers to stoop and pick up

<sup>321</sup> S. P. Spain 189. Rodney to Stephens, 29 Jan., 1772 (sent by Hillsborough to Rochford, 27 March, 1772).

<sup>322</sup> Add. MSS. 24158. Rodney to Stephens, 5 July, 1772 (enclosed by Rochford to Grantham, 25 Sept., 1772).

<sup>323</sup> S. P. Spain 190. Rochford to Grantham, 15 May, 1772. *Ibid.* Grantham to Rochford, 4 June, 1772.

what they pleased of the shares of smaller states"<sup>324</sup> were read with the greatest attention as likewise was the ambassador's account of the warm reception of the news of the Swedish revolution at the Spanish capital.<sup>325</sup> While the king distinguished the Swedish and French ambassadors with unusual attention and Grimaldi openly remarked that if he were the French minister he would be highly pleased at the development as it gave added strength to an ally, Grantham wrote that the Spanish minister seemed well aware that England would take an active part if France set the example by lending open help to Sweden, but did not appear to consider that Spain was bound to assist France in such an outbreak. "Upon the whole", the Englishman concluded "this court is very sensible of the affairs of Europe being in a very critical situation and of the inevitable extension of the flame in case any power should depart from the neutrality observed at present and unwilling that such an event should happen".<sup>326</sup>

As the union of Russia, Austria, and Prussia became more alarming and the Swedish affairs increased in international importance the relations between the French and Spanish courts tended to become progressively warmer. In the autumn of 1772 the two courts were believed to have under consideration a scheme of a joint declaration to Russia to compel her to withdraw her fleet from the Mediterranean and it was alleged that Spain under guise of preparing for a Moroccan war was arming with a

<sup>324</sup> Add. MSS. 24174. Grantham to Rochford, 6 August, 1772. Two months later (8 Oct., 1772), Grantham wrote: "This led him (Grimaldi) to talk again of the partition of Poland with much discontent, and indeed I find the measure has given the greatest disgust here."

<sup>325</sup> The news of the Swedish revolution of the 19 and 20 August reached Madrid on the 11th of the following month. Grantham wrote that there was no doubt but that the intelligence gave the greatest satisfaction in Madrid. Add. MSS. 24174, Grantham to Rochford, 17 Sept., 1772.

<sup>326</sup> Add. MSS. 24158, Rochford to Grantham, 13 October, 1772. Rochford wrote "If M. Grimaldi should speak to your Excellency on the consequences of Russia's attacking Sweden, you may from yourself assure him that you know we will do every proper thing in our power to discourage Russia, from such an attempt, but that if she persists and France in consequence of it sends a fleet we cannot in that case remain idle spectators." On November 9, 1772, Grantham wrote to Rochford (Add. MSS. 24174, copy) that "there was a report and strongly believed

view to putting herself in a position to make the declaration.<sup>327</sup> By the close of the year Spanish military reorganization and preparations had become very noticeable, Grantham writing that he had reason to think that if called upon their army could be got ready with alacrity.<sup>328</sup> It was evident that Spain, seeing the rest of Europe an armed camp, considered it dangerous to remain longer absorbed in the domestic problems to which she had turned after her dispute with England, and believed that only observation, vigilance, and readiness constituted a policy consistent with national security.<sup>329</sup>

The crisis of the year 1773 came in April when there seemed great likelihood that Russia would carry her arms into Sweden. This action, Rochford thought, would force Sweden to call for the aid of France and lead the latter to desire Spain to make common cause. He wrote to Grantham that the king "would never see the French or Spanish fleet at sea, separated or united, without

here that Spain had jointly with France declared their attention to support Sweden and act in concert on the subject. I am credibly informed that no such measure has been taken however France may have bragged of the certain concurrence of this court."

The following letter makes it clear that in Russia it was believed that while Spain refrained from affording military assistance to Sweden nevertheless that she supported the French policy in that country in another way: Add. MSS. 24159, R. Gunning to Grantham, St. Petersburg, 1/12 June, 1773. "This court [the Russian court] is extremely piqued and dissatisfied with those of France and Spain. They impute . . . the success of their opponents in Sweden to the money transmitted by Spain last summer which we are told amounted to 400,000 pounds sterling."

<sup>327</sup> Add. MSS. 24158. Rochford to Grantham, 11 Sept., 1772.

<sup>328</sup> Add. MSS. 24174, Grantham to Rochford, 8 Oct., 23 Nov., and 3 Dec., 1772.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.* Grantham to Rochford, 29 March, 1773. "The language held here by the minister and the French ambassador is, that there is no faith left in public transactions; that nothing from the courts of Russia and Prussia is surprizing, but that the court of Russia is acting an ambitious and faithless part, which was not expected, that a stop to their union and progress might and ought to have been made at first, that at present the best system to be adopted was observation, vigilance, and readiness to step forth if necessary. And these are probably the reason of some steps now taking place here, such as orders for officers to join their respective corps at the beginning of next month, and preparations for a camp at Carthagenia which are very considerable. It is proposed to assemble these 22,000 men and great stores of artillery . . . and implements proper for a siege."

sending a force at least equal to theirs".<sup>330</sup> Almost simultaneously with this despatch, information reached Grantham from Paris that orders had been given for a considerable armament at Toulon, to consist of twelve ships of the line and six frigates under the command of Count d'Estaing. Though officially declared by the French government to be merely "*une flotte d'évolution*", the British found it very difficult to suppose that a fleet equipped at this critical period and commanded by as distinguished and enterprising an officer should be intended merely to "parade in the Mediterranean and exercise the ships",<sup>331</sup> and early remonstrances were shortly followed by the announcement that the British government in consequence of the Toulon fleet had given orders that fifteen ships of the line should be fitted out and a proportionable number of stores should be made ready.<sup>332</sup> A dispatch from Rochford of April the twenty-third "taking notice of the alarming preparations making at Cartagena" instructed Grantham to give notice of the English armament to Grimaldi, but to "declare in a confidential manner that the armament is meant solely by way of precaution, it being impossible for His Majesty to see so considerable a fleet getting ready at Toulon without providing for the safety of his own dominions".<sup>333</sup> Before these instructions had reached Madrid, the French on second considerations had suspended the greater part of the armament at Toulon and assurance had also been given the British government through Paris that the naval preparations at Cartagena were likewise countermanded.<sup>334</sup> At Aranjuez, Grantham's interviews with Grimaldi disclosed a surprisingly full and intimate knowledge on the part of the Spanish government of the details of the French plans<sup>335</sup> while the language

<sup>330</sup> Add. MSS. 24159. Rochford to Grantham, 9 April, 1773.

<sup>331</sup> Add. MSS. 24159. Stormont (British ambassador at Paris) to Grantham, 10 April, 1773.

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.* Rochford to Stormont, 20 April, 1773. Copy enclosed in Rochford to Grantham, 20 April, 1773.

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.* Rochford to Grantham, 23 April, 1773.

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid.* Stormont to Grantham, 24 April, 1773.

<sup>335</sup> Add. MSS. 24174. Grantham to Rochford, 27 April, 1773. The ambassador gathered from the conversation that Spain was "acquainted from the first with the intention of France to arm in defence of Sweden if the latter was attacked by

generally held was, the ambassador reported, that England "could have connived at the French expedition and that the cause of Russia did not deserve her interposition and assistance".

By the close of May positive declarations from Russia and Denmark to the court of Stockholm removed French apprehensions of an attack on Sweden and caused the French government to announce that the Toulon armament was not merely suspended but totally laid aside. In the letter which conveyed this intelligence to Grantham, Rochford remarked that it was "highly necessary to know whether the secret understanding between these two courts [France and Spain] would not lead Spain to undertake what France has given up upon the false opinion perhaps that we would be more easy at seeing an operation against the Russians by Spain than by France". While merely a guess this suspicion was strengthened, the secretary of state said, by the alarming state of the Spanish naval forces. He conjectured that "both France and Spain, quite apart from the Swedish affair are jealous of the increasing power of Russia and are willing to use every means to defeat the progress of the very formidable Triple Alliance". While an explanation of the readiness of the Spanish force could not be properly demanded officially, he suggested that Grantham should remark as from himself how much he should hate to see Great Britain arming on account of Spain.<sup>336</sup> But despite every suggestion of possible unfortunate consequences activity in every branch of the Spanish military service continued. The arrival in June of a singular letter from the emperor of Morocco announcing that he would find himself obliged to advance against the Spanish North African post of Ceuta unless Charles III. delivered it into his hands<sup>337</sup> provided the Spanish government with an excuse which served for the rest of the year

Russia, and that Spain looked upon France as bound to take that part, but he apprehended that by our arming was out of the question". Spain is not disposed to join France in defense of Sweden although he was sure that "they are determined to arm for the defence of France if France becomes liable upon our arming to be attacked".

<sup>336</sup> Add. MSS. 24159. Rochford to Grantham, 28 May, 1773.

<sup>337</sup> Add. MSS. 24174. Grantham to Rochford, 17 June, 1773. "The Emperor of Morocco has by means of a third person conveyed a most singular letter to His

for the maintenance of the heavy armaments which it thought fit to keep up.<sup>338</sup>

Through this year of military activity, as in the preceding twelve months, isolated incidents which crept into the correspondence between the Spanish and British courts were few in number. Grimaldi in August expressed his highest satisfaction at the few events which had happened for months in connection with contraband allowing their absence to be "entirely due to the good faith with which the English government discouraged the practice in America and in Europe".<sup>339</sup> America offered nothing more serious than a renewal of the old plea that Spain should give some undertaking to discourage the protection offered in Spanish America to deserting slaves from the British dominions<sup>340</sup> and should cease the practice of imprisoning in Europe British subjects arrested in America.<sup>341</sup>

The first six months of 1774 constituted a period of greater calm in the relations of France, England, and Spain than had been known since the troubled seventies began. Relieved from the immediate prospect of war over the Swedish question and restrained by the activities of the menacing triple alliance and considerations of possible developments in the American colonial dispute which had commenced to assume large proportions, the three powers, while remaining armed, showed a real desire to enjoy a breathing space before resuming plans for active hostilities against each other.

Catholic Majesty in which after the strongest professions of his desire of peace, he states that the People of the Law will not allow him to leave Ceuta in the King of Spain's possession; that he has hitherto evaded their solicitations by feint marches and preparations, but is at last obliged to comply with their request and injunctions by acquainting the Catholic King, that unless Ceuta is delivered up he must proceed with force against it and adds a proposition that to prove how sincerely he desires to be on good terms with the crown of Spain, the war between them shall be carried on only by land, for that he will not interrupt their vessels and commerce by war."

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.* Porter (in absence of Lord Rochford) to Grantham, 21 Dec., 1773.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.* Grantham to Rochford, 9 August, 1773.

<sup>340</sup> Add. MSS. 24159. Rochford to Grantham, 16 July, 1773. With enclosures from the governor of Grenada. Add. MSS. 24174. Grantham to Rochford, 9 August, and 9 September, 1773.

<sup>341</sup> Add. MSS. 24159. Grimaldi to Grantham, 9 August, 1773.

In this period of unusual tranquillity the sovereignty of Crab Island became for the second time in two years a matter of diplomatic discussion between the English and Spanish courts, offering to the Bourbon powers, had they been in a mood to open their long premeditated war against England a feasible *casus belli*. The deserted island in question was one of the smaller West Indian islands lying off Porto Rico. An English officer who visited it described it as seven leagues in length with an eastern end low and barren but the remainder of rich soil and possessed of rivers and one fine harbor, as well as good anchorage anywhere to leeward. Other attractions were plenty of fish, at times turtles, and some wild fowl and vast quantities of crabs.<sup>342</sup>

In 1772, the island had been the scene of an exciting and disastrous encounter between a British merchant vessel from Jamaica, which had put into Crab Harbor for a supply of hardwood posts, and three Spanish vessels from Porto Rico. According to the English captain's account of the event his vessel had been "fired on and boarded by upwards of forty men, mostly negroes and mulattos, armed with pistols, cutlasses and large knives, who being enraged at resistance cut and wounded him and his people in a very cruel manner and after stripping them of everything carried them in that condition to Porto Rico where they were thrown into a dungeon and confined forty days destitute of clothes, almost starved and entirely deprived of the benefit of fresh air." When a war vessel despatched by Admiral Man had failed to secure redress from the governor of Porto Rico, who refused to restore the vessel or release the crew, on the ground that the latter had been found cutting wood on an island belonging to his Catholic majesty and would have to remain prisoners until a trial decided their fate, the matter had passed into diplomatic channels.<sup>343</sup>

Rochford, in despatching the papers to Grantham in June,

<sup>342</sup> S. P. Spain 190. Captain Corner of the *Crescent* to Admiral Man, St. George's Bay, Grenada, 28 Jan. 1772. (Copy enclosed in Hillsborough to Rochford, 18 June, 1772.)

<sup>343</sup> Cf. A paper entitled "Narrative of the seizure of the schooner 'Betsy'" a copy of which Rochford enclosed to Grantham, 16 June, 1772. Add. MSS. 24158.



1772, had stated that he learned from the Plantation Office that the British had always considered Crab Island as belonging to Great Britain although it had at different times been contested by the Spaniards who had once or twice driven away the English frequenting it. In King William's time, the secretary said, the government, on a suspicion that the Spaniards intended to settle it, had sent instructions to the governor of the Leeward Islands not to suffer any foreign nation to establish themselves there and these orders had been constantly repeated. There was, however, Rochford had emphasized, no inclination to seek a quarrel over the property of an island on which the British had never thought it worth while to make an establishment and probably never would; and Grantham was therefore not to make a point of the sovereignty, but allow Spain to put the restitution demanded on any ground she pleased.<sup>344</sup> The Spanish minister on being approached had pretended never to have heard of the English claim. He had remarked that the Danes and the French had more than once applied to the Spanish government to purchase it and that it had long been considered a Spanish possession. Since 1754, the governor of Porto Rico, he said, had been under particular orders to visit the island every four months and prevent foreign settlements upon it.<sup>345</sup>

While once or twice renewed, the matter had gradually been allowed to drop and nothing had been heard of it for some time when in April, 1774, Rochford received from Vice-Admiral Parry of the Leeward Islands station a copy of a correspondence which had recently passed between himself and the governor of Porto Rico. The latter had written that, knowing that Parry had five ships of war and some smaller vessels for the purpose of conducting a great number of families to Crab Island to take possession of it for Great Britain, he was sending an officer to protest as the island was attached to his captain-generalcy.<sup>346</sup> Parry had returned the reply that the governor's information was

<sup>344</sup> Add. MSS. 24158. Rochford to Grimaldi, 16 June, 1772.

<sup>345</sup> S. P. Spain 190. Grantham to Rochford, 9 July, 1772.

<sup>346</sup> Add. MSS. 24160. Don Miguel de Muesas (Governor of Porto Rico to Vice-Admiral Parry, 11 Feb., 1774. Copy enclosed by Rochford to Grantham, 19 April, 1774. Later Spanish advices informed Grimaldi that the English admiral had denied on the one hand any intention to settle the island and on the

erroneous since it was not necessary to take possession of an island that already belonged to the crown of Great Britain and was included in the government of the Leeward Islands.<sup>347</sup> In informing Grantham of the incident Rochford wrote that if Grimaldi should remonstrate and insist on the sovereignty the ambassador should endeavor to convince him of his error and let him see that if a serious dispute should be entered into about the property of a place of so inconsiderable a value it would be owing to his court and would not correspond to the king's friendly endeavors to avoid it.<sup>348</sup> Grimaldi brought the matter up, but so far from showing any desire to push it to extremes he informed the British ambassador that he did not consider that the admiral's move had been in consequence of particular orders, and that in order to prevent any disagreeable event he had sent orders the previous day to the governor of Porto Rico to suspend for a time his usual visit to Crab Island in order to avoid meeting the British there and that very soon his Catholic majesty would send proofs of his right to the island to the Spanish embassy in London with instructions to his representative to endeavor to convince the British government of the soundness of the Spanish claim.<sup>349</sup> In June the British government informed Grimaldi that there was no thought of encouraging the establishment of a

other of being there by accident, his business there merely being to visit the island as one of the King of Great Britain's possessions. *Ibid.* Grantham to Rochford, 2 May, 1774.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.* Vice-Admiral Parry to the Governor of Porto Rico, 14 Feb., 1774. Copy enclosed in Rochford to Grantham, 19 April, 1774.

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.* Rochford to Grantham, 19 April, 1774.

<sup>349</sup> Add. MSS. 24174. Rochford to Grantham, 2 May, 1774. "M. Grimaldi told me further . . . that from a thorough desire of preventing any eclat or disagreeable event in America, he had by the packet boat which was to go out yesterday for Coruña procured orders to be sent to the Governor of Porto Rico, to suspend for a time his usual visit to Crab Island in order to avoid meeting us there again for the present, at the same time not to slacken his observation upon any future visits on our parts, and he proceeded by saying that in the same spirit of preventing any open dispute, which is not immediately repeated, he would consider as null, he would answer M. Escarano [Spanish chargé d'affaires in England] by a speedy and secret opportunity and he would instruct him to talk to His Majesty's ministers in an amiable manner on this subject and that he should furnish him with materials which he looked upon as proofs of the Catholic King's right to the island."

British settlement upon the disputed island. With this the subject passed out of the correspondence of the period.<sup>350</sup>

The interest of the incident lay in the fact that in it the Spanish government was offered an opportunity, such as the Falkland incident had provided, to open the war with England, and, though heavily armed, declined it. The explanation of the difference between the action of 1770 and 1774 was undoubtedly to be found in the better comprehension at the Spanish court of the unreadiness of France to undertake active hostilities and the fuller understanding of the special disinclination of the French government to go to war over a matter arising from the relations of Spain with her English neighbor in America.

Hope was high in England at the beginning of the summer of 1774 that the months ahead would prove to be as free from serious disputes with the Bourbon powers as had been those of the first half of the year. Spain had just rejected, in the recent phase of the Crab Island incident, a possible excuse for opening hostilities and, while her armaments were alarming, her difficulties with Morocco offered an explanation, if a somewhat inadequate one, of them. In France, a new king had just ascended the throne whose strong assurance of a pacific disposition towards his neighbors was held to be proved by the appointment to the head of foreign affairs of M. Vergennes. This future champion of the cause of the disaffected English colonies, Rochford described to Grantham in June, 1774,<sup>351</sup> as "hitherto reckoned a man of business" not esteemed to be possessed of "shining talents" nor of "an enterprizing disposition" but to be of "a calm and peaceable turn", characteristics which the English secretary of state declared he welcomed as "happy presages of peace" giving "reason to hope that the flames of war will not be soon extended to this side of Europe".

<sup>350</sup> Add. MSS. 24160. Rochford to Grantham, 10 June, 1774. "I have in commission from His Majesty to repeat to your Excellency that there is not the least intention of encouraging any British subjects to settle at Crab Island and that he wishes to avoid reviving the discussion of the right of sovereignty to so inconsiderable a place."

<sup>351</sup> Add. MSS. 24160. Rochford to Grantham, 24 June, 1774.